To Get Ex-Agent Agee's Book

Marchetti Says CIA Asked Him for Help

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WASHINGTON — A former Central Intelligence Agency official, who has recently been one of the CIA's chief critics, claims he was approached by the agency last year and asked to obtain an advance copy of a book manuscript being written by another disgruntled former agent.

Victor Marchetti, who quit as executive assistant to the CIA's deputy director in 1969 and began writing about the agency's inner workings, said a CIA case officer came to his home and asked his assistance in getting a manuscript being written by Philip Agee.

At the time the approach was made Marchetti was involved in a court fight with CIA over the agency's attempt to censure his book, "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence."

"It was kind of sneaky," Marchetti said. "I asked him, 'Why should I do this for you guys?' "

Marchetti said the case officer, a friend from his days with the agency, told him that while he and the agency had disagreements, "I was still considered a patriotic American and would I please acquire Agee's manuscript."

The approach was made the same day Marchetti obtained a passport to go to England to promote his book. Agee was living in England then, and Marchetti had never met him.

"It kind of shook me up," Marchetti said, "I told the guy I was not inclined to do it," although the CIA had claimed to him that Agee had become an agent for the Cuban government or the KGB.

Marchetti said he subsequently met Agee in England and decided he was an "intense, sincere man, trying to be purer than the driven snow, who does things without considering the consequences."

After returning to Washington, Marchetti said, the CIA man came to see him again. "I told him that I didn't get the manuscript and that I wouldn't get it."

"I believe now," he said, "that the agency already had the manuscript and they were trying to test me to see if they could draw me back in, or they were setting me up to discredit me."

Agee's manuscript has since been published as a book in England, "Inside the Company: CIA Diary."

According to CIA Director William E. Colby, publication of the book forced the agency to make widespread changes in intelligence operations in Latin America because Agee published a list of nearly 250 persons identified as CIA officers, agents, informers and collaborators.

Plans are under way to publish the book in the United States, and the CIA has indicated it will seek some legal recourse to block it.

"I'm obliged to do everything the law will allow me to do," Colby said in an interview recently.

In discussing the continuing controversy over CIA activities, Colby, referring to Marchetti and Agee, said: **"Our Greatest problems come from two employes who left."**

Colby said Agee had written the CIA a friendly letter when he resigned, indicating that he would abide by the agency's secrecy oath, that he was grateful to his former employer and that he would be cooperative in the future if he was needed. But Colby said, "In an old-fashioned sense, Agee fell in with bad companions."

Agee, who grew up as a conservative Catholic, is now described as a revolutionary socialist. After serving the CIA in Uruguay, Ecuador and Mexico, he resigned. He was in business briefly in Mexico and traveled to Cuba, France and Britain.

Colby says Agee's foremost purpose in his book is "to destroy the CIA."